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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to provide an updated overview of the current theory and practice of English as a second language (ESL) composition. The following topics are addressed: (1) the goals of composition courses in the ESL curricula; (2) course content, derived in part from goals in the curricula; (3) a review of techniques and procedures for teaching ESL composition; and (4) evaluation of ESL compositions. The goals of the course are defined in relation to the proficiency level of the students and the elements of composition. The techniques reviewed include controlled composition on the elementary level; and dictation, fill in the blank, sentence combination and completion exercises, and paragraph correction exercises on the intermediate level. Instruction on the advanced level emphasizes university-level skills that involve explaining, analyzing, and writing from lectures or readings. With regard to evaluation of compositions, the discussion centers on the purpose of evaluation, and various types of evaluation and grading scales. Six appendices provide sample syllabi on freshman composition and on technical writing for foreign students, composition correction guides for intermediate and advanced levels, a sample composition evaluation form, and a sample grade sheet. (Author/AMH)

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CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY FOR ESL COMPOSITION TEACHERS

Kyle Perkins and Beverly H. Konneker

When a teacher and/or curriculum designer develops an ESL composition course today, there are many factors that influence the content, methodology, and evaluation of the composition program. Prospective students of today's writing course come to class with diverse preparation, proficiency, goals and intended uses for the target language. While it is not feasible to design a... deliver individual writing programs for each student, the beginning composition teacher and possibly the in-service writing teacher needs to be aware of the ways in which this diversity can be addressed.

This paper attempts to provide an updated overview of the current theory and practice of ESL composition. The following topics will be addressed: 1) the goals of composition courses in the ESL curricula; 2) course content, derived in part from the goals in the curricula; 3) a brief review of techniques and procedures for teaching ESL composition; 4) evaluation of ESL compositions.

I. Goals of Composition Courses in the ESL Curricula

The goals of composition courses depend on several criteria, including the proficiency level of the students. We use the criteria listed in Paulston and Bruder (1976) to establish levels of proficiency referred to in this paper:

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Level	Michigan Examination
Beginning	0-60
Intermediate	60-75
Advanced	75-

Beginning
~~Elementary~~ students are monolingual to a very high degree, are able to write few, if any, grammatically correct and complete sentences, and may be unable to write Latinate cursive script with great facility. (See Seward 1972 for a discussion of an approach to teaching cursive writing.) Such students are linguistically unprepared to write anything in English because they control neither sentential nor intersentential grammar. It follows that one must 1) teach handwriting, 2) reinforce grammar content, and 3) introduce new grammar through the written mode.

Ideally, at the intermediate level, students should be able to control sentential grammar, i.e., they should be able to write grammatically correct and complete sentences with subjects and predicates, although some, alas many, of these sentences may contain "local" errors. Having been reasonably assured that the intermediate students can write grammatically correct and complete sentences, teachers can continue to introduce other more syntactically complex constructions and begin to introduce intersentential grammar, paragraph organization, and logical or rhetorical organization. Once "global" errors begin to disappear from a student's writing, s/he can be introduced to organization. Very early on, students should learn how to string together semantically-related sentences which cluster around a topic. It is not too early at this level to introduce the form and function of topic sentences and the typographical convention of indentation. These rhetorical structures

can/should be accompanied/supported by instruction on the form and function of structure vocabulary to convey various logical relationships.

At the advanced level, we assume that students have mastered sentential grammar, intersentential grammar and paragraphing. We further assume that students have mastered the use of structure vocabulary to signal various logical relationships and convey/signal the logical organization. (We recognize that many, if not all, of these assumptions may be unwarranted.) What is left at the advanced level is much work on selecting and ordering ideas, developing and supporting ideas, establishing cohesion and coherence, and different genres of academic writing.

The purpose of the previous section was to show how course content can grow out of the goals of the curricula. Having established this derivational relationship, we will now discuss in greater detail the specific content at the various proficiency levels.

II. Content

But first, a general overview of what composition entails is in order. We assume that in order for a student to write, s/he must be able to produce grammatical sentences, but composition goes beyond the sentence level as numerous studies of objective measures have shown (cf Perkins, 1980). The writer must have a subject in mind, at best some facet of a subject, have something to say about that subject, and have an intended audience in mind, if only the teacher. It seems that a student writer is most successful when s/he is motivated to write about a psychologically-involving topic. Granted, not all our assignments are sufficiently provocative, but the most productive exercises

are based on topics about which the student has something to say. In sum, composition entails manipulation of words in grammatically correct and complete sentences; those sentences must then be strung together to form a piece of contiguous prose which conveys what the writer wants to say about a topic. The controlling idea must be focused in a thesis statement and introduced in the initial pragraph(s), and developed in the body; and finally a line of thought established by hinging paragraphs together by various transitional words and phrases. If a standard type of logical organization is to be employed, various structure vocabulary must be utilized to link sentences, paragraphs and ideas together so the reader will be able to follow the development of the line of thought.

A list of skills either mentioned or implied in the previous section includes at least the following: 1) the ability to write grammatically complete and grammatically correct sentences; 2) the ability to manipulate and fit sentences into self-contained units, i.e., paragraphs; 3) the ability to select and order relevant information (for example, setting the thesis statement, telling the reader what the composition is about, organizing and ordering the relevant information into paragraphs which develop and support the thesis statement); 4) the ability to spell words, both content and function words; and 5) the ability to terminally punctuate sentences (cf Clark 1972: 106-117).

Although the polished form of written discourse requires the obvious skills of handwriting, spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax, and vocabulary just mentioned, skillful writing chiefly depends upon the less obvious skills of mental preparation: reading, analysis, synthesis,

and a sense of style and rhythm in language. 'Synthesis' here means the ability to organize one's own ideas, arguments, and data into a coherent whole. As an activity, synthesis is often called 'pre-writing': the identification of one's own voice and one's audience, and the preparation of an outline. Writing proper is the translation of one's outline into cohesive prose. Both of these skills however, have receptive counterparts which logically precede: reading and analysis. We use 'reading' here to mean the ability to follow the structure of longer written prose--what is usually meant by 'comprehend'--without necessarily detecting that structure consciously. 'Analysis' here refers to the more conscious ability to identify specific elements of prose structure.

Editing is the final skill. In addition to the mechanics of proofreading, editing requires a knowledge of the rhetorical conventions of the particular genre and acknowledgment of others' material (footnotes, bibliography). But most importantly, it requires that sense of style and rhythm by which the writer achieves 'communicative efficiency' or 'relative readability' (Hirsch 1977:75).

III. Methods

Most of the teacher's time at the elementary level will be devoted to introducing and reinforcing grammar. Such exercises include "controlled composition" techniques, such as changing 1) affirmatives to negatives, 2) singulars to plurals, 3) some to a lot of, and introducing the expletives it and there.

All "controlled composition" techniques have the same goal in mind: to restrict the student's freedom of expression so s/he can reduce the

production of errors. Any methods and techniques anthology lists a catalogue of controlled composition techniques. The following list taken from Heaton (1975) is representative of the more sophisticated types: (1) the student is given a short reading extract and then required to write a similar paragraph, using notes he has been given; (2) exercises based on reading extracts: copying with minor alterations, changing point of view, changing the style and register, adding further information; (3) linking sentences involving subordination and coordination. (Heaton 1975: 149-151).

In previous sections reference has been made to the content of elementary-level composition courses and various techniques which are entailed by the content. At the intermediate levels much work is still needed on reinforcing grammar. It has been our experience that the form and function of the past tense, future tense, indirect-direct object complement patterns, possessives, and coordination are not adequately controlled by intermediate-level students (see Shaughnessy 1977 for a discussion of similar problems among native speakers).

Dictation, fill in the blank, sentence combination and sentence completion exercises are especially useful at the intermediate level to reinforce discrete grammar points (see Sutherland 1967, Taylor 1976, Arapoff 1969, and Paulston and Bruder 1976). In addition, the teacher can supply the class with a paragraph of short, choppy sentences and have students combine them using coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. It goes without saying that students must have had previous instruction in the form and function of these structure vocabulary before

they are given such an exercise. Another technique for the intermediate level class is to have students give the teacher sentences about a topic which are written on the board (see Radford 1969 for one version of this technique). After the ungrammatical sentences have been corrected, the class, with prompting from the teacher, can select a general statement first, then select and order the supporting, developmental sentences. Again, such an exercise must be preceded by presentation and explication of topic sentence and supporting sentence concepts.

Dicto-comp is a hybrid procedure of dictation and composition (see Ilson 1962 for further discussion). The teacher reads a paragraph twice, the students take notes, and then write a paragraph following the stimulus material. Experience has shown that this procedure is a good mode of illustrating organization. In sum, these procedures attempt to involve the students in overt participation. Writing is an active process; a teacher who "talks at" composing is not doing her job; she must actively involve her clients.

It is our contention that composition at the advanced level should reflect the tasks with which the student is confronted in an academic setting every day. Typical university-level skills involve explaining, analyzing, writing from lectures or from something that's been read. At the advanced levels, grammar per se is not taught. Specific grammatical points that cause trouble are treated on an individual basis and they usually include subordination, sentence connectors, parallel structures, tense shifts.

At the advanced level, the major emphasis should be on organization:

organization of a composition into introduction, body, and conclusion; different kinds of logical organization. Again, the students must be actively involved, cognitively engaged in the advanced level composition class (see Buckingham and Pech 1976). Writing is thinking and students can't learn to write while listening to the teacher drone on. Ask the students to describe a room. Write down the students' input. Ask them what they think would be the best way to organize the data and why, what sorts of structure vocabulary would they use to relate the sentences together? Give them ideas, put their ideas on the board, have the students pick out the main ideas, have the students elect and order the supporting details according to a logical method of organization (see Kaplan 1971 for techniques of teaching organization by outlining). A final point: we agree with Carr (1967) and Taylor (1976) that organization should not be delayed until the advanced level. As soon as students can string together two or more grammatically complete sentences, they should be introduced to organization. It is at the advanced level where the majority of time should be devoted to the form and function of logical organization.

Ideally, ESL students at the college freshman level will already have working, though not perfect, control of mechanics and sentence structure, as well as a serviceably large vocabulary. Like native speakers at this level, they will seldom have acquaintance with the principles of expository prose and source attribution; moreover, both groups often have no clear understanding of the difference between fact and opinion. The goals of freshman composition for foreign students

then, are to remedy these lacks. The sample syllabi (see Appendices A and B) offer our approach to teaching these skills.

IV. Evaluation

The composition evaluation process is a complex, multi-faceted one. A distinction between types of evaluation must be made. Will the evaluation consist of a grade or of summary comments about the strengths and weaknesses of the composition itself? If grades are to be given, the teacher can use either an analytical or a global method of grading compositions. The decision to use either method depends, to a large extent, on the purpose(s) of evaluation. And finally, if the composition teacher decides to mark compositions, rather than grade them, s/he can simply comment on various aspects of the composition, on the composition as a whole, or a combination of the two. Another alternative for the teacher to consider in the marking process is the use of checklists. In the following section, we will address in greater detail purpose of evaluation, types of evaluation, and types of grading scales.

What is the purpose of evaluation? The chief purpose of evaluation, though students might deny it and teachers often lose sight of it, is to increase the students' mastery. A second purpose is to assess the students' problems so that the teacher can plan future classes to fit the students' needs. Where pass-fail grading is used, as in an intensive English center, assessing a student's achievements in order to assign a course grade has little importance; but in college composition courses, the institutional letter-grade requirement elevates this third purpose of evaluation to a more important place for both teacher and student.

Composition evaluation permits the teacher to give students useful feedback. In order for students to utilize evaluation feedback, the teacher must be able (1) to indicate errors so that students understand what is wrong; (2) to mark selectively; (3) to distinguish class-wide problems from idiosyncratic problems and comment or 'repair' appropriately; (4) to give positive feedback along with the necessary negative (see Stevick 1976: 103-124).

Experience is invaluable in determining how to give students useful feedback on their composition; however, for the novice composition teacher or graduate assistant partial solutions are available. The novice teacher and graduate assistant can (1) use a standard set of comments suited to the students' level (see Appendices C and D); (2) use a selective comment form (see Appendix E); (3) keep 'running scores' of problems for each class, or less formally, briefly review papers after marking them; (4) use additive rather than subtractive comment forms (see Appendix E) and, as part of the ongoing training, (5) hold practice marking/grading sessions in which teachers can comment on one another's comments.

The psychological factor of positive reinforcement is invaluable to student mastery. Other factors which encourage learning through evaluation are immediate feedback, clear communication from teacher to student, and student participation. Some of the teaching techniques which employ these devices are summary marking (see Irmscher 1979: 142-152), selective marking, peer correction (see Witbeck 1976), and in-class writing which is monitored (variously called studio-technique, Ananse Tales technique; see Horn 1974).

The composition teacher must decide when to make summary comments on compositions and when to grade them. All types of evaluation, whether for a grade or not, require some system of commenting or grading. One must decide how to comment and how much to comment. In order to reduce teacher fatigue and student discouragement, one can comment selectively, choosing the features one comments on according to the teaching aims for that unit. Commenting on every error and infelicity is a technique best reserved for the periodic assessments in which grades are assigned; this gives students a realistic idea of what they have achieved while the intervening non-graded, selectively-commented papers allow students to concentrate on their learning rather than on their errors. The teacher can comment on and correct all mistakes or only those that impede communication, the global errors. The comments can be split between form and content, and structure and punctuation.

Sometimes it is useful to correct everything for beginners. At the elementary level, errors probably reflect competence and are not the result of performance slips. Beginners can't remember symbols so it is not advisable to use proofreaders' marks because beginners may even copy them into the running text on a rewriting exercise. The "Knapp composition check-list"(Knapp 1972) is best used with intermediate and advanced level students. Peer correction is also a viable procedure for non-beginners. The teacher picks out common errors; afterwards, students and teacher work at correcting them. Sometimes the teacher can assign students to work in pairs.

There are many methods of commenting on student writing, but these

fall into two general classes: (1) comments and (2) prepared lists, forms, or check-sheets. The latter have the advantage of mechanization and thus help minimize the time spent in marking. However, marginal comments seem more useful to students just beginning to write connected prose, since teacher comments are directly interpretable (provided they are themselves complete sentences rather than sentence fragments). Students unused to the brevity of check-sheets or the mysteries of proofreaders' marks tend, even with a guide, to be distracted from the task of learning to write prose by the need to learn to read marks. For the very advanced or college level student, comments again are more valuable than check-lists. Such comments, however, are most effective if placed at the end of the student's paper (see Irmscher 1979: 143-152 for the technique and virtues of summary comments).

We have found the following maxims of commentary by Hirsch (1977) to be helpful guides in commenting on specific points in ESL compositions:

1. Comment on just two or three points in any paper.
2. Select those matters for comment which are most important for an individual student at a particular time.
3. Summarize the commentary in a usable form.
4. Begin writing comments only after a rapid analysis of the paper as a whole.
5. Choose those comments which will be likely to induce the greatest improvement in the intrinsic effectiveness of the student's next paper.
6. State the comments in an encouraging manner.

7. Do not hesitate to repeat a comment over several papers.
8. Keep track of the comments so that nothing of great importance for a particular student is omitted during the course.
9. Make clear from the tone of the comments that they deal with a craft to be learned and not with the teacher's personal taste. (Hirsch 1977: 160-161)

The second class of marks consists of an apparently limitless variety of forms all of which allow the teacher to evaluate writing rapidly, and when desired, selectively. Proofreader's marks may be used if students are given a codesheet by which they can learn to interpret these signs; nevertheless, these systems add to the students' burden by requiring them to learn a large inventory of logographic signs. Proofreader's marks, official or otherwise, are best limited to a few which the teacher finds especially serviceable, such as sp. On the other hand, students beyond the first stage of writing learn fairly easily to use a number code (see Appendix C). There are no unusual symbols to learn, and the association of number to comment is made without undue pain or effort simply by using the code sheet. The teacher can always comment marginally if the student makes a non-coded error. Note that the items on the code sheet can be fitted to the proficiency level of the students. Appendix C consists mainly of questions which hint to the student writer that some feature is wrong or weak in some respect. The student must thus actually analyze and correct the error, rather than merely copy a correction provided by the teacher. As the emphasis shifts from mechanics and grammar to rhetorical form, students can be

eased into even greater responsibility for editing the former by using an abbreviated form like Appendix D.

A code sheet used for reference can be made into a check sheet appended to individual papers by adding slots or boxes. This change in form alters the function. Where code sheets allow the teacher to mark any specific error in a paper, check sheets enable the teacher to summarize problems (see Appendix E). Check sheets usually have very general categories, although they can be made more detailed. Most recognize both rhetorical and grammatical/mechanical skills (see Appendices E and F), though again, the emphasis can be shifted with the goals of the course. Finally, check sheets can reverse the psychological focus from weaknesses to strengths. One need merely check what is satisfactory in a paper rather than what is not (see Appendices E and F for forms which do both).

All student work must be kept. There is no magical retrieval system to be recommended. However, it is not a bad idea to have students purchase two substantial "blue books" for the composition class. Blue book No. 1 is turned in on Monday with that day's assignment to be returned Tuesday. On Tuesday that day's assignment is submitted to the teacher and so on. Periodic conferences should be scheduled to allow time to discuss difficulties. At such conferences the complete work samples to date can be examined by teacher and student. Motivation can be cultivated by the teacher who reviews the work to date, noting marked improvement in an area, even if it only consists of crossing "t's" and dotting "i's."

Assigning grades to compositions is a troublesom issue. Measurement texts reveal that there are two methods of grading which are applicable to composition evaluation: the global, holistic, or rating method, and the analytical or point-score method. In using the global approach, the composition teacher reads the composition, forms a general impression and assigns a mark to that composition based on some standard. That standard may be a model composition to which the grader has reference or some vague notion in his/her mind. Such evaluation can be highly subjective due to the following factors: bias, fatigue, internal lack of consistency, previous knowledge of the student, and shifting standards.

On the other hand, a composition teacher employing the analytical scheme has separated the various features of the composition into components for scoring purposes. Heaton (1977: 137) suggests the following scheme:

	5	4	3	2	1
Grammar			x		
Vocabulary				x	
Mechanics			x		
Fluency			x		
Relevance		x			

Total = 15 (out of possible 25)

According to Mehrens and Lehmann (1978) the analytical method offers the following advantages: (1) minimizes the influence of extraneous material; (2) yields very reliable scores; (3) allows certain features to be graded separately; (4) shows the student how his/her grade is obtained.

The analytical method of grading compositions is recommended for classroom use in cases where the teacher wishes to evaluate and comment on various components of the essay. Obviously, when several dozen compositions are to be graded for diagnostic or proficiency testing, the global method is preferable because of the time limits of the task.

One source of grading problems is an immoderate standard--either too low or too high--on the teacher's part. Since inexperience breeds insecurity, new teachers tend to need the approval of their students more than do their seasoned colleagues. Frequently, the inexperienced teacher hesitates to assign a poor grade, feeling (if not consciously thinking) that the student will judge the teacher by the same scale. Thus, new teachers tend to inflate grades. Less commonly, an insecure teacher will want to be "tough" and therefore grade too severely. In all cases, the teacher and supervisor of novice teaching assistants must be able to separate personal from academic judgments.

A more persistent problem in grading is how to weight various aspects of a student's writing in the overall grade. Carefully-structured grading forms can reduce much of the indecision, but such forms themselves depend upon the teacher, the supervisor, or the whole faculty having previously decided how the balance shall be drawn. Even an experienced teacher can be beguiled by the apparent simplicity of formulas or check sheets into making automatic, mechanical decisions.

A related question is how to give the more adventurous student credit for attempting to go beyond the safely mastered, familiar structures and vocabulary, without disregarding the achievement of the

more correct but cautious student. Finally, at the intermediate and upper levels, the problem becomes one of not overstressing organization and other rhetorical skills; students still need to be kept up to the mark in grammar and vocabulary.

In sum, the task of marking compositions reliably and validly is probably a craft in itself which is acquired through introspection, consultation, and concerted effort.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE SYLLABUS: FRESHMAN COMPOSITION FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

Week

1 Introduction; diagnostic essay(s)

2 Paragraph definition, examples; discuss goals

3 Topic sentence

4 Unity, Completeness, Order, Coherence/Cohesion

or

Unity, Development, Organization, Continuity

5 PARAGRAPH TYPES: allot about 4 meetings per type, in this or some other order:

Description

Instructions and Process

Classification and Partition

Cause and Effect

Comparison and Contrast

Definition

12 Basic Essay Organization:

Thesis statement

Introduction, Body, Conclusion

13-15 Writing at least two longer essays using various paragraph styles

Text: Bell and Cohn 1976

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE SYLLABUS: Technical Writing for Foreign Students

Week	Writing Activity	Skills
1-3	1. SUMMARY: practice by reviewing the 6 paragraph types; can include ESSAY QUESTION as summary.	
2-3	2. Job Application: RESUME; LETTER OF APPLICATION	
2	3. TERM PAPER/TECHNICAL REPORT: introduce structure of such papers, preview activities, preview skills used to write.	I. MENTAL PREPARATION a. select topic b. anticipate major elements (skeleton structure of paper)
3	4. MEMO: have class report choice of research paper topic in memo form	
4-7	5. PROGRESS REPORTS: have class report progress of research and writing in this form	II. SOURCES, RESEARCH a. keeping track of sources b. note cards c. attribution: quotation vs. paraphrase vs. plagiarism d. footnotes e. bibliography
8-9	6. Body: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, HYPOTHESIS, DESCRIPTION OF _____, VISUALS	
10-11	7. Introduction: First draft of ABSTRACT, REVIEW OF LITERATURE	III. RHETORICAL PREPARATION a. analysis of content b. outlining
12-13	8. Conclusion: First draft of DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, EVALUATION/CRITIQUE, RECOMMENDATIONS	IV. EDITING
14	9. Writing Final Version	a. first draft b. layout c. revision (style content) d. final editing: spelling punctuation grammar
15	10. Oral presentation: requires summary and visuals	

Text: Fear 1977

APPENDIX C

COMPOSITION CORRECTION GUIDE-Intermediate Level

1. Use adequate margins.
2. Indent your paragraphs.
3. Subject-verb agreement. Remember?
4. Wrong tense. What tense should it be?
5. Wrong verb form. What tense is it? Did you use an auxiliary? Should you use an auxiliary? Did you use a preposition? What changes do you need to make?
6. What is the subject of this verb?
7. Wrong word order. Is this a question or a statement? Did you use one of the negative adverbs? (Rarely, seldom, only once in a while, not only, never, etc.)
8. Shouldn't you begin a new sentence here?
9. Isn't this a good place to begin a new paragraph?
10. Wrong article use. Should you use a, an, the, or no article?
11. Missing verb. Do you need a form of to be or to have? Did you just forget to use a verb here?
12. Wrong form. Use another form of this word. What do you need--a noun, a verb, adjective, adverb? Would two words be better than one? If you used a negative (no, not, never, neither, etc.) did you select the correct one?
13. Wrong spelling. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary.
14. Unclear. I don't understand this. (Perhaps I can't even read it!)
15. Remove this word or these words.
16. Inappropriate expression.
17. Wrong number? Do you want to use the singular or plural form? Is it a non-count noun?
18. This verb requires an object.

19. Wrong preposition. What should it be? Or should it be omitted?

20. Wrong pronoun. Which one do you want? Singular or plural? 3rd person? Subject, object, or possessive? What does the pronoun refer to? (what is the antecedent?)

21. Unclear pronoun reference. What does this pronoun refer to? Perhaps you should rewrite this sentence to make your meaning clearer.

22. Wrong word. Omit this word then find some other way to say what you want to say. Perhaps you only need another word; perhaps you need to rewrite several words.

23. Wrong use of comparative construction. Or you misused <u>many</u> or <u>much</u>. Perhaps you confused <u>too</u> and <u>very</u>.

24. Irregular form. Is it an irregular verb, perhaps?

25. Not a complete sentence.

26. Missing word--probably a preposition.

27. Missing word--probably an adjective.

28. Wrong use of possessive.

29. Wrong conjunction use. Perhaps you used the wrong conjunction.

30. Capital letter.

31. Punctuation. Do you need a comma, apostrophe, period, question mark, etc.?

32. Relative pronoun error. The pronoun is missing or you used the wrong one.

33. Relative clause error. Wrong place in the sentence.

34. Relative clause error. You repeated the pronoun in the relative clause.

35. Wrong use of passive. Should it be passive? Did you use the passive voice in the wrong tense? Check your auxiliaries.

36. Wrong place. This word (or these words) would be better placed elsewhere in the sentence.

37. Ambiguous.

38. Error! You've made this mistake before. Can you figure out what's wrong?

APPENDIX D

COMPOSITION CORRECTION GUIDE-Advanced Level

1. Subject-verb agreement. Remember that the verb must agree with the subject in person and number.

2. Plural/singular. Do you want to use the singular or plural form? Is it a non-count noun?

3. Spelling. Use your dictionary to find the correct spelling.

4. Pronoun. Which one do you want? Singular or plural? 3rd person? Subject, object, or possessive? What does the pronoun refer to? (What is the antecedent?)

5. Article. Is this the right article? Should you use a, an, or the? Do you need an article here?

6. Preposition. Did you use the right preposition? Or should it be omitted?

7. Word order. Is this a question or a statement? Did you put the adjective in the right place?

8. Verb tense. What tense should it be? Present? Past? Present perfect?

9. Verb form. What form of the verb should you use here?

10. Wrong word or phrase. Omit this word or phrase and find some other way to say what you want to say. Perhaps you only need another word; perhaps you need to rewrite several words.

11. Wrong form. Use another form of this word. What do you need--a noun, verb, adjective, adverb? If you used a negative (no, not, never, neither, etc.) did you select the correct one?

12. Incomplete sentence. Do you need a subject? Do you need a verb? Is this only a phrase?

13. Awkward. This phrase or sentence doesn't sound right. It is difficult to understand. Rewrite it.

14. Ambiguous. This sentence or word isn't clear. It can have more than one meaning. Rewrite it to make it clearer.

15. Punctuation. Do you need a comma? Should you begin a new sentence here? OR, is this punctuation necessary?

16. Not necessary. This word or phrase is not necessary. Omit it.

APPENDIX E

COMPOSITION EVALUATION

Good	OK	Weak	Very Weak	
___	___	___	___	Topic Sentence
___	___	___	___	Introduction
___	___	___	___	Support for Topic
___	___	___	___	Conclusion
___	___	___	___	Paragraph Organization
___	___	___	___	Logic
___	___	___	___	Relevance
___	___	___	___	Use of Referents
___	___	___	___	Subject/Verb Agreement
___	___	___	___	Use of Tenses
___	___	___	___	Word Choice

APPENDIX F

COMPOSITION GRADE SHEET

UNDERSTANDS:	P	P-	F
1. topic sentence	_____	_____	_____
2. paragraphing	_____	_____	_____
3. organization	_____	_____	_____
4. development	_____	_____	_____
5. unity	_____	_____	_____
NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN:			
6. grammar	_____	_____	_____
7. usage/vocabulary	_____	_____	_____
8. run-on and fragmentary sentences	_____	_____	_____

OVERALL GRADE (circle one) P F

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